Abstract

Justice of the peace, merchant, landowner, and entrepreneur from Prescott and Shutesbury, Massachusetts. Nine volumes contain descriptions of his duties as justice of the peace, a book of deeds and mortgages from local real estate transactions, account books of sales in his general store and from his palm leaf hat business, and notes of accounts with individuals.

Background on Samuel Henry

Prescott was among the Western Massachusetts towns abolished in 1938 to allow the Swift River Valley to be flooded, thereby creating the Quabbin Reservoir to provide Boston with water.

Contents of Collection

Samuel Henry was a justice of the peace, merchant, landowner, and entrepreneur in early nineteenth century Prescott, Massachusetts. Henry eventually moved to Shutesbury, Massachusetts in 1857. The nine volumes of accounts in this collection reflect his varied interests and responsibilities. His record of acknowledgements covers his duties as justice of the peace and show local real estate transactions from 1829 to 1857. His personal activity in real estate is reflected in his book of deeds and mortgages, covering the period 1813 to 1876. Henry also ran a general store and began a palmleaf-hatmaking business. The hat business was an extensive homework industry, which involved the braiding of hats (usually by women at home) in exchange for credit at Henry’s store. Much of Henry’s activity in the local economy similarly took place without the exchange of cash. The use of the account books, which also include extensive notes of accounts with individuals (1830-1881) help reconstruct the rural economy of nineteenth-century Massachusetts.

Collection inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deeds and Mortgages</td>
<td>1813-1876</td>
<td>1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of Acknowledgements of Deeds and Other Instruments</td>
<td>1829-1854</td>
<td>1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ledger No. 1 for Palm Leaf Hat Manufacture</td>
<td>1835-1838</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash Book</td>
<td>1838-1854</td>
<td>1:3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash Book</td>
<td>1840-1862</td>
<td>1:4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Account of Cash Paid for Family Expenses</td>
<td>1854-1859</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Agreements and Small Accounts</td>
<td>1854-1857</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account of Rents and Expenses on Tool Place</td>
<td>1857-1860</td>
<td>1:5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Account of Rents on Johnston Place 1858-1859 Box 1: 5
Record of Acknowledgements of Deeds and Other Instruments 1854-1857 Box 1: 5
Account of Cash to Be Loaned 1854-1860 Box 1: 5
Accounts with Individuals 1830-1838 Box 1: 6
Accounts of Notes and Cash on Interest 1846-1860 Box 1: 6
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**Administrative information**

**Provenance**
Acquired from Donald Howe, 1960.

**Processing Information**

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**Search terms**

**Subjects**
- Massachusetts--Economic conditions--19th century--Sources.
- Panama hat industry--Massachusetts--History--Sources.
- Prescott (Mass.)--History--Sources.
- Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--History.
- Shutesbury (Mass.)--History--Sources.

**Names**
- Henry, Samuel, fl. 19th century.

**Genre Terms**
- Account books